

BASEBALL

Gwynn Hits The Spot And Sinks The Mets

Scoreboard: Mets 1, Padres 2

By GEORGE WILLIS SAN DIEGO, Sept. 4 — There are the Mets, a team of young, inexperienced players who can execute with remarkable consistency one day and not have a clue the next.

Gwynn delivered a lesson tonight at Jack Murphy Stadium that the Mets would be wise to remember by pounding out three hits and positioning Bip Roberts for the game-winning run in the Padres' 2-1 victory in 10 innings.

Gwynn's third hit of the game came on a perfectly executed hit-and-run play off reliever Doug Henry. Gwynn drove a hard ground ball through the hole at shortstop, created when Jose Vizcaino went to cover second base as Roberts broke from first.

Roberts turned the corner and wound up at third on the play. After Henry walked Ken Caminiti to load the bases, Scott Livingstone singled down the right-field line past a diving Rico Brogna to win the game for the Padres, who are three games out of the National League West lead.

Roberts' single to left field had opened the inning, but it was Gwynn's one-out hit that put the squeeze on the Mets, who had to load the bases and bring their infield in, a move that helped Livingstone muscle the ball past Brogna.

"He likes to play hit and run in that situation," Mets Manager Dallas Green said of Gwynn. "Everybody knows that. Yet he invariably finds the hole that's open."

Gwynn entered the game batting .361, three points behind the league batting leader, Mike Piazza of the Dodgers. Gwynn's three hits in five at-bats, including a double, pushed his average to .364.

While it was Gwynn who set the table in the 10th inning, Livingstone played the role of hero by getting the game-winning hit on an 0-2 pitch from Henry (3-6), who pitched the final inning and a third.

Lost in the finish was a solid performance by Mets starter Dave Mlicki, who allowed just one run on five hits in a career-high eight innings. He struck out seven and walked three before being lifted for a pinch-hitter in the ninth inning with the game tied at 1-1.

Ticketed for the bullpen when Jason Isringhausen was called up from Class AAA Norfolk after the All-Star Game break, Mlicki has stayed in the rotation because of shoulder surgery to Pete Harnisch. After some early struggles, he has enjoyed some success lately. This was the fifth time in six games that he had gone at least six innings and the third time in four games that he had gone at least seven.

"I got ahead of some guys today, and that always helps," said Mlicki whose record remained at 7-6. "I established the breaking ball early and I was able to use the fastball to go inside."

A big reason Mlicki has stayed out of trouble is an improved ability to keep the baseball in the park. He flirted with the league lead by giving up 20 home runs in his first 87 innings. But over two relief appearances and his last six starts, Mlicki has yielded only one home run.

Aside from Mlicki's performance, this was not a game the Mets deserved to win. They left nine runners on base, including four in scoring position. They had a chance to break a 1-1, tie in the eighth when they loaded the bases with one out. But reliever Ron Villone struck out Brogna and then Doug Bochtler induced Ryan Thompson to pop up to the second baseman.

"Rico's at-bat was one that hurt a little bit," Green said. "We had a couple of chances there. But that's the case of a young ball club not being consistent."

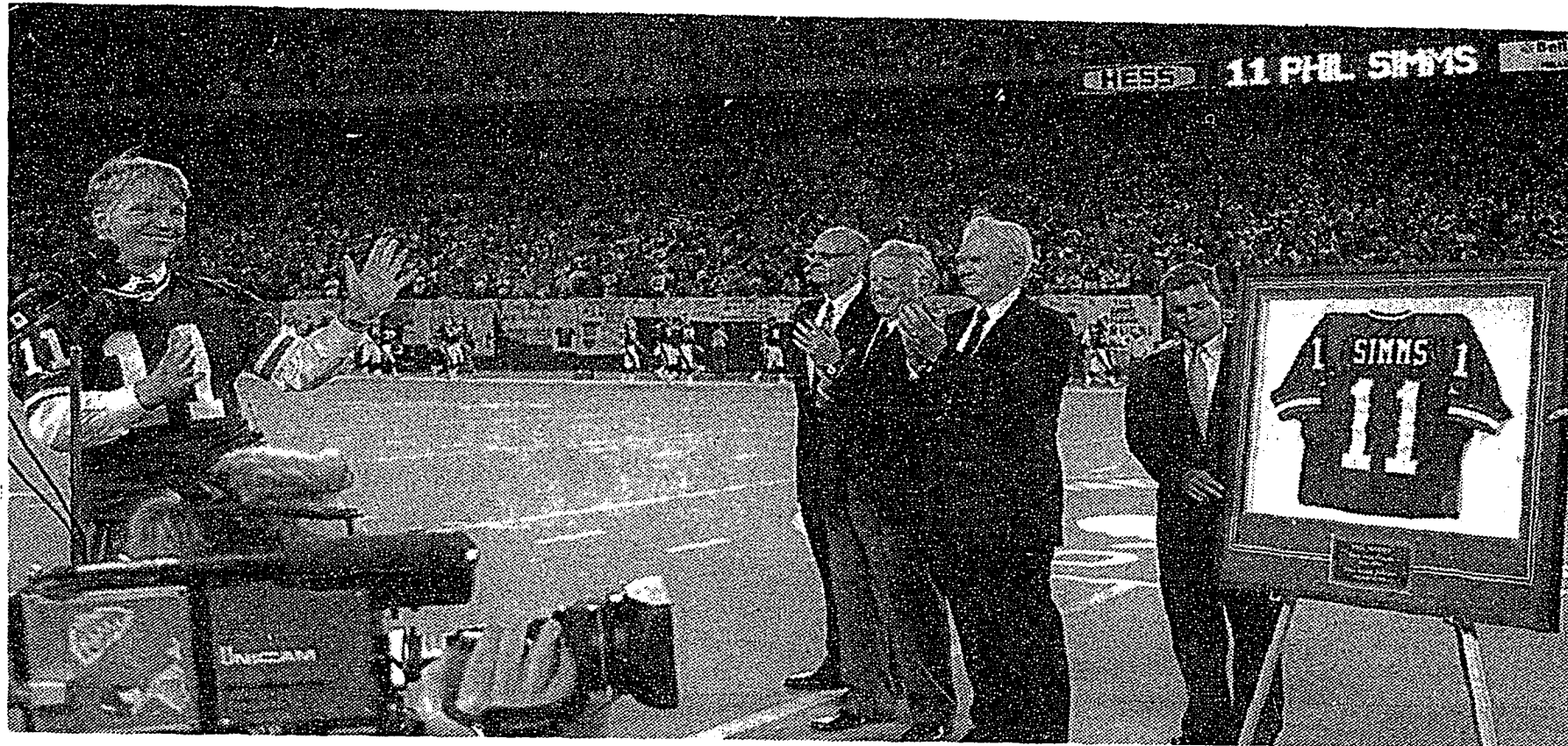
INSIDE PITCH

EDGARDO ALFONZO's back problems have flared again. He pinch-hit Saturday and Sunday against the Giants, but the stiffness in his back returned. Mets doctors will decide whether he will return to New York for an examination. Alfonzo was held out of pre-game workouts Monday, and the Mets weren't planning to play him on the artificial turf at Montreal beginning Friday.

The Mets got a scare when center fielder RYAN THOMPSON ran over left fielder RAMON BUFORD while making a catch of a deep fly ball to left-center in the third inning. Buford, who got the worst of the collision, was attended to on the field for several minutes and remained in the game.

The Mets' Class AAA team at Norfolk lost the first game of the International League playoffs, 2-0, at Richmond on Monday.

PRO FOOTBALL



The Giants Stadium crowd had at least one occasion to cheer last night: When Phil Simms, left, appeared during the ceremony to retire his number.

Cowboys' Stampede Leaves the Giants Gasping for Air

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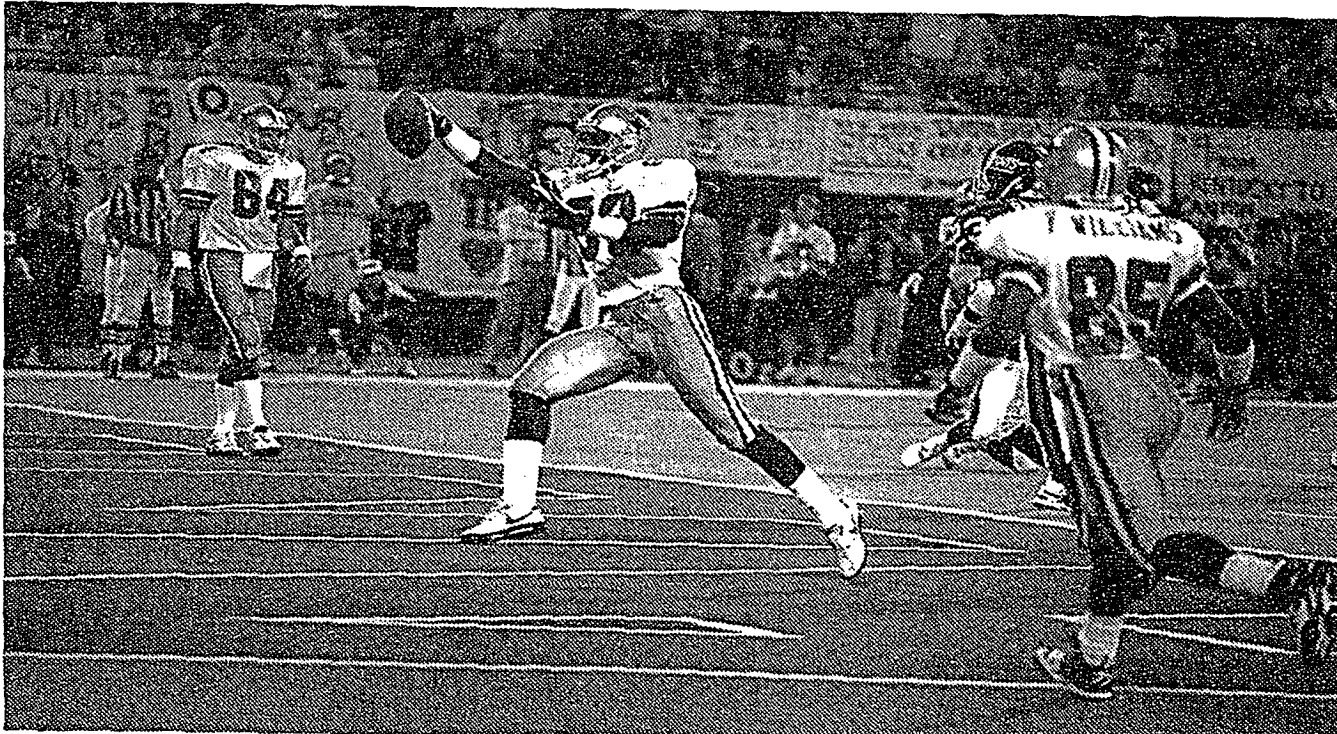
beat us in all areas." He added, "They looked like they were playing at a different speed."

How bad was it? Dallas had 238 total yards to the Giants' 92 in the first half alone. New York had just 29 yards rushing in the first half. Smith scored four touchdowns and finished the game with 21 carries for 163 yards. To add insult, when Dallas was leading, 28-0, quarterback Troy Aikman (15 of 20 for 228 yards and one touchdown) threw deep to Michael Irvin (7 catches for 109 yards) for a 43-yard pass play. Smith then scored his fourth touchdown from one yard out to make it 35-0.

The Giants' defense simply looked outmatched. After this game, there should be no questions about the work habits of Dallas Coach Barry Switzer. Giants players said that the Cowboys seemed to know almost everything they were going to do. There was no better example of that than the Smith run that broke the game open.

On the Cowboys' first series, on second-and-10 at the Dallas 40-yard line, Smith ran up the middle of a hole so big that 10 of the 320-pound Nate Newtons could have fit through it. Smith ran untouched with only Sparks, the fast cornerback, giving pursuit. The Giants had blitzed from the outside and the Cowboys, seeming to know not only that the Giants might blitz but from where, picked it up. Strong safety Jesse Campbell was supposed to help linebacker Michael Brooks seal the middle, but he ran into an official. The other safety, Vencie Glenn, went the wrong way.

"It was awesome, an awesome feeling," Smith said about the run. "No better way to come back and start the season. You get your first touch and then it turns into a touch-



Michael Irvin scoring the Cowboys' second touchdown last night, the only one not scored by Emmitt Smith.

down. I mean the line did a great job. The hole was so big you didn't have to be a genius to find it."

Smith later apologized for showing off after one of his touchdowns.

Back at the 40, where the play began, lay a wasteland of Giants bodies. Defensive tackle Ray Agnew had been pushed completely out of the play by center Ray Donaldson, and Agnew ended up somewhere near the turnpike. Linebacker Mike Croel had been picked up in the blitz and the rest of the front-line players were non-factors.

"They knew exactly what we were doing," said linebacker Corey

Miller. "Up until that point we were very excited about this game. That run deflated our emotion, our intensity, and we just played flat after that."

It is hard to imagine a team getting deflated so badly by just one play, but that's exactly what happened. Dallas went on to score 28 consecutive points, moving the ball at will, hitting Smith or tight end Jay Novacek (5 catches for 91 yards).

"Every man on defense took their turn screwing up," said cornerback Thomas Randolph. "That game was a disaster."

And a circus.

EXTRA POINTS

Former Giants quarterback KENT GRAHAM was close to agreeing to terms with the Detroit Lions as of late last night. But before the Lions did anything, they wanted to work him out to make sure he was physically fine. ... The Giants had not been shut out at home since a 10-0 loss to the Eagles in 1976. ... Even though Coach DAN REEVES scoffed at the idea earlier in the week, he kept quarterbacks TOMMY MADDOX and STAN WHITE both on the 45-man roster for the game.

Young Simms Starts to Follow Father's Footsteps

By GRANT GLICKSON

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J. — Although Phil Simms's No. 11 jersey was officially retired last night in a ceremony at Giants Stadium, his oldest son, Chris, had put that celebrated number behind him last week when he opted for No. 12.

"They didn't have a No. 11, and I really don't like the number too much, anyway," said Chris, a freshman quarterback at Ramapo High School here. "It would probably put extra pressure on me. I'm going to stay with No. 12."

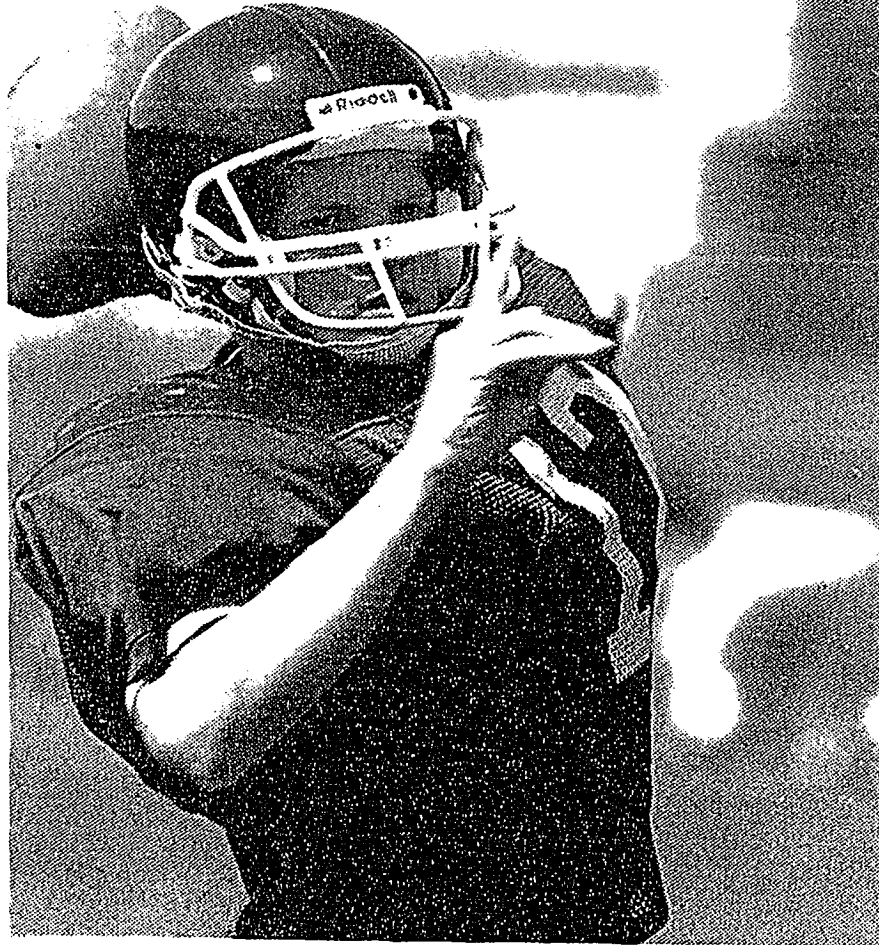
As the son of the man who played quarterback for the Giants for 15 seasons, Chris, 14, has had to endure more pressure than most youths his age, even star athletes. Although Phil Simms helped direct the Giants to two Super Bowls, he also drew criticism when the team failed. As a result, Chris fought his way through childhood, reacting to the taunts of his peers, who often blamed his father for every Giants loss.

"I would always get into fights with kids because my father would have one bad game and it was all his fault," said Chris, whose blond hair, blue eyes and rosy cheeks are a youthful reminder of his father's image. "He got put down more than anybody and that really hurt me. I couldn't stand people saying stuff about my dad. You could say anything you want about me. But don't talk about my father. I hate that more than anything."

As he grew up, moving from the Biddy level to the recreational junior leagues, other youths chastised him and hit him extra hard just for being who he is: the son of one of the Giants' greatest quarterbacks.

"Ten kids would tackle me and say, 'You stink. You're as bad as your father,'" he said. "It was hard. But I've learned to deal with it."

His mother, Diana, said that all the negative attention embarrassed Chris and made him feel as if he



Chris Simms, the 14-year-old son of the former Giants quarterback Phil Simms, will be Ramapo High School's quarterback this season.

didn't belong. "We just told him that we're sorry that you have to be in this situation," she said. "But you are just going to have to learn to turn your other cheek. Just turn your head and pretend that you didn't hear it, even though you did. It's all part of being

the son of a professional athlete." Even at his current level, Chris, now 6 feet 2 inches and 180 pounds, has had trouble fitting in. His older teammates have been a bit standoffish toward him because of his celebrity father and that he will likely start over two seniors, Chris Brid-

Scoring summary for the game: First Quarter (7-0), Second Quarter (14-0), Third Quarter (28-0), Fourth Quarter (35-0).

TEAM STATISTICS table comparing Dallas and New York Giants.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS - RUSHING table.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS - PASSING table.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS - RECEIVING table.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS - DEFENSE table.

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